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Military Free-Fall Parachute Operations

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Considered to be one of the military's most demanding and potentially hazardous advanced skills, military free-fall parachute operations are used to infiltrate enemy areas under the cover of darkness to avoid detection.

Infiltration of operational elements, pilot teams and personnel replacements are conducted under the cover of darkness, with varying weather conditions and terrain. Military free-fall parachutists land at their objective as a combat-ready, tactical unit.

Taught by Company B, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), special operations MFF team members are taught to conduct operational high-altitude, low-opening missions by exiting an aircraft at altitudes up to 35,000 feet above sea level. The MFF parachutists free fall to approximately 4,000 feet from ground level before deploying their canopies. During high-altitude, high-opening parachute missions, MFF parachutists exit at high altitudes and deploy their canopies at high altitudes using highly-maneuverable, gliding parachute systems to silently travel distances of more than 50 kilometers.

Special operations forces personnel make the transition from a static-line airborne parachutist to a military free-fall parachutist in a four-week course taught at Fort Bragg, N.C., and Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz.

During the first week, called ground week, students learn body stabilization while flying in a vertical wind tunnel at Fort Bragg as well as basic aircraft procedures, altitude physiology and other required MFF parachuting ground training.

Students then report to Yuma Proving Ground to conduct airborne operations during the last three weeks. Advanced aircraft procedures beginning with individual exits while wearing combat equipment introduce students to the MFF infiltration mission. Students learn to exit en masse during grouping exercises. Training culminates with the conduct of night airborne operations with combat equipment and oxygen equipment.

Company B trains about 540 MFF students yearly.

— Veritas Et Libertas —